

The American House Hotel
Union Street, cor. Moravian Alley,
Hope, Warren County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer,
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey.

The American House Hotel
Union Street, cor. Moravian Alley
Hope, Warren County, New Jersey

21. Dec
4.

Owner and occupant : William D. Whittsell

Dates of Erection : South end unit probably 1780;
Center unit 1780-1808; frame
north end unit late 19th Cent.

Architect : Unknown

Builders : 1- Members or employees of the United
Brethren (Moravian) Congregation at Hope,*
possibly for the "Single Brethren's house";
2- the same; 3- Abraham Freese 1844-1854.

Present Condition : Two-part dwelling house and annex,
used as hotel; two-story front porch added
about 1856; window sash not original; mod-
ern frame service wing at rear.

Number of Stories : Two and one-half, over cellar.

Materials of Construction :

Foundation - broken range split-face lime-
stone masonry.

Exterior Walls + same as foundation,

Interior Walls - masonry party-walls and
frame partitions, all lathed
and plastered excepting a
double-face panelled wood one
in 2nd story of original unit.

Chimnies - brick above roof

Roof - gable, slate-roofed; lean-to annex
and front porch are tin-roofed.

Historical Data :

The following sentence in regard
to this house appears in an account of the village of
Hope published in 1881 :- "The lower story of the

Footnote : *A diagram of the village of Hope, inscribed
by Bishop Ettwein, the Moravian pastor in 1774-75 and
1779-80, found on the rear cover of the Hope church
book now deposited in the Moravian archives at Bethlehem,
Pa., shows two lots labelled "Single Brethren", but with-
out a building thereon, at the southeast corner of the
present Union and High Streets. (K.G. Hamilton, asst.
archivist, Bethlehem, Pa., 2 March 1942.) "It was the
custom to have separate establishments for such as had

south end of the American Hotel was originally one of the Moravian houses, and was occupied as a doctor's office by Gideon L. Leeds M.D. and owned by Daniel Mixsell who sold it to Abraham Freese who built the addition to its present size and in 1844 converted it into a hotel, and is now kept by Gideon L. Howell." (a) This statement has been collated by search of the title records to this property as appears hereinafter.

Examination of the house, however, shows that not only the "lower story of the south end" but the entire two and one-half stories and basement, having a 35 feet 6 inches front, formed the original unit of the present hotel, and that the northward extension by 22 feet was made soon afterwards. The stairway being in the first unit, but a fireplace and bake oven in the basement of each of these two units and of similar design and construction, bears out this analysis. The third unit, a frame addition on the north end of the second, contains the bar-room, and is of latter half of the 19th century construction. The two-story front porch which masks the original two units of the house is obviously of the Greek Revival period of 1830-1850. Incidentally, the present lowered grade and stone masonry retaining walls of Union Street were made by the County in 1930. Since our survey of this house, the large old barn behind the same has been demolished or has collapsed in 1942.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE VILLAGE OF HOPE 1769-1808.

The following notes are taken from a published "Sketch of the Settlement of Hope, New Jersey" (b), evidently derived from the diary of the Moravian Congregation there :- In the spring of 1769 the first settlers from Bethlehem, Peter Worbass and family, arrived and were accommodated by Samuel Green* whose land the Moravians had purchased. A

Footnotes :-

not families viz. the single brethren's house for young men and apprentices, where they lived and carried on their respective employments, and the sisters' house for the abode of unmarried females, and the widows' house." (Barber and Howe, Historical Collections State of N.J., 1845, p.493.)

(a) J.P. Snell, editor, History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J., 1881, page 663.

(b) The Rev. C.F. Kluge, in Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, volume I, pages 51 et seq.

* "In 1769 the Moravians from Bethlehem, Penna., purchased a tract of about 1000 acres at this place (Hope) of Mr. Green who lived in a log house on the hill, a few rods from the Christian Church." (Barber and Howe, cited above, page 492.) A house on the west line of Walnut St., above Cider Alley, is marked "Greens" on the diagram of the village mentioned in footnote on page I hereof. The vacant Christian Church stands at southwest corner Walnut St. and Cider Alley at this date, 1942.

flour mill was erected 1770 (g.v. NJ-569). In May of that year, the place was officially named Greenland, but on 8 February 1775 it was determined by drawing lots that it be named Hope. Worbass removed to Nazareth, Penna., in 1771 and was succeeded by Frederick Leinbach as manager, who opened a small shop for the settlement. Daniel Hauser took charge of the mill and Frederick Rauschenberger became assistant on the farm. In 1773 Frederick Blum settled here and established a tannery. In 1771 Brother John Jacob Schmick was appointed minister, and he was succeeded by Brother Francis Boehler in 1773, by Brother Daniel Sydrich in 1774, and by Bishop Ettwein to May 1775 when he was relieved by Brother Joseph Neisser, and again from November 1779 to March 1780. The site of the village was surveyed on 25 and 26 November 1774 and a town laid out by the brethren Nathaniel Seidel, John Ettwein, Hans Christian von Schweinitz and the surveyor, Brother J.W. Golgosky. In 1775 a house was built for the farmer and a building for the distillery and brewery; Brother Stephen Nicolaus began the manufacture of bricks and lime, Brother Adolph Hattman erected a house and smithy. In 1776 a building for a store was erected and occupied by Brother Frederick Leinbach in 1777. In 1781 the "Gemein Haus" (chapel, with apartments for the pastor and family) was erected and dedicated 8 November 1782, there being 53 members of the congregation at Hope. Pastor Neissen was succeeded in 1784 by Brother Meder who preached in English every Sunday. In the same year a Sisters' Economy was begun, the women living in the Gemein House, and a girls' school under Sister Anna Rosina Mack. In 1780, a saw-mill was erected; in 1783 a pottery by Brother Lewis Moeller from Salem, N.C., and in 1784 a public inn was opened in the old Gemein Haus (site of present Christian Church). In 1786 Brother Christian Till took charge of the boys' school in place of the pastor, and served as organist also. In 1787 Brother Lewis F. Boehler became the pastor, was succeeded in 1795 by Brother Abraham Reinke and in 1803 by Brother John Lewis Strohle, and in the fall of 1807 by Brother Meder who remained until the abandonment of the settlement in 1808. In 1790 the congregation was 147, of whom 100 lived in the village and 47 in the vicinity, after which year it steadily decreased. In 1791 an oil mill was put into operation in the lower part of the saw-mill. Brother Dreyspring, the adviser of the Single Brethren, died during the general sickness in that year. In 1798 the first marriage was solemnized at Hope. In 1799 Brother Conrad Kreuser, the only single brother at Hope, removed to Nazareth, Penna. In 1800 there were 8 vacant houses, the girls' school discontinued, and but 84 members of the congregation. On 13 February 1803, it was decided to accommodate the single sisters and a proposed boarding school for girls in Brother Hanke's house. It was occupied accordingly on 5 July following by the sisters, and the school opened on 1st of August but was given up in June 1805. In 1804 the boys' school was discontinued, and the store was transferred to Brother Daniel Kleist. In 1806 the Single Sisters Economy was abolished. On 26 May 1807, members of the Eld-

ers' Conference visiting the American congregations, at a meeting at Hope announced their decision to dissolve the establishment there, sell the property and remove the remaining members elsewhere on account of the poor financial condition. Accordingly, a contract of sale of the 1500 acres Hope Tract in Oxford and Knowlton Townships, Sussex County, N.J., was made with Nicholas Kramer of Allentown Township, and Abraham Horn of Easton, both in Northampton County, Penna., dated 22 September 1807, the consideration money to be \$48,000 (c). On Easter day, 17 April 1808, the last sermon was preached and with the solemn evening service of that day the existence of the congregation at Hope terminated. The few remaining families left for Bethlehem and Nazareth, Penna., during the following week and later.

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SEARCH OF TITLE TO THE AMERICAN HOUSE HOTEL

The details of successive ownership of the particular property in Hope, here considered, are derived from the land and probate records of Sussex County to 1824 and in those of Warren County to the present, a search of which is reported as follows viz -

(1) Deed of 16 Feb. 1808 : The Rev. Christian Lewis Benzoin of Salem, N.C. By his attorney John G. Cunow of Bethlehem, Penna., Esq., to Samuel Sitgreaves Esq. and Jacob Arnett, merchant, both of the borough of Easton, Penna., conveying for \$8600 certain nine lots with the houses, outhouses, edifices, buildings, etc., in the town of Hope, Sussex County, N.J., viz. No. 1 "in the plan of said Town" (d) having 104 feet frontage on the north side of High St. and 132 feet depth, bounded N.E. and W. by Nicholas Kramer; Nos. 5 and 6 in said plan having combined frontage of 140 feet 3 inches on the north side of High St. and 227 feet 9 inches depth to Cyder Alley; lots nos. 13, 14, 15, and 16 contiguous having frontage of 280 feet 6 inches on west side of Union St. and 214 feet depth; two adjacent lots nos. 17 and 18 having combined frontage of 211 feet 2 inches on the east side of Union St. and 135 feet 4 inches on the south side of High St, bounded south by Moravian Alley and east by Trout Alley (being the property here considered). Recital is made that these lots are part of the 945 acre Hope Tract which Samuel Green and wife Anna conveyed to the Rev. Nathaniel Seidel* by deed of 7 March 1769 recorded in Sussex Co. Deed Book Q, page 187, and that said Seidel by his will dated 20 June

(c) Recorded in Sussex Co. Deed Book R, page 391. Some alteration of this contract must have been made, for the Moravian agent appears as grantor of parcels of the same tract in deeds dated in 1808. L.D.C.

(d) The village of Hope was laid out on 25 and 26 November 1774. An original map of the survey is in the files of the Moravian Historical Society at Nazareth, Penna. L.D.C.

1770 devised all real estate in trust to Frederick Marshall for the United Brethren, and that said Marshall, of Salem, N.C., devised the same in trust to said C.L. Benzein by will dated 16 Dec. 1801. (Sussex Co. Deed Book S, p. 1.)

(2 and 3) Sitgreaves and Arnett, grantees abovenamed, conveyed lots nos. 17 and 18 thereof to Nicholas Kraemer as recited in a deed of 3 Dec. 1811 by which Kraemer, of Allen Twp., Northampton Co., Pa., yeoman, and wife Catherine, conveyed the said two lots to David Barclay of the said town of Hope, Sussex Co., N.J., for \$2000, "with the houses, out-houses, edifices, buildings," etc. (Sussex Co. Deed Book X, page 471.)

(4) By deed of 21 Sept. 1818, "The Revd. David Barclay" (e) and wife Mary, of Oxford Twp., Sussex Co., N.J., conveyed to Daniel Mixsell of same place, for \$2650 the same lots nos. 17 and 18 with the houses etc. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. 02, p. 200)

(5) By deed of 29 April 1822, Daniel Mixsell of Oxford Twp., (in which the village of Hope was then situated), the grantee last abovenamed, conveyed to "Doctor Gideon Leeds" (f) of the same place, for \$2350 the same two lots nos. 17 and 18. (Sussex Co. Deed Bk. V2, p. 20.) See first paragraph on page 1.

Footnotes :-

* Nathaniel Seidel, 1718-1782, Bishop of the United Brethren Church. As nominal proprietor of real estate of the church, he purchased the Hope Tract for a new settlement to be organized according to the exclusive system of other Moravian towns. (Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, 1886, page 225.)

(e) The Revd. David Barclay, Presbyterian pastor of Oxford, Mt. Bethel, and Knowlton churches 1805-1815. (J.P. Snell, ed., History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J., 1881, p. 632.) By deed of 20 Apr. 1818, this David Barclay of the town of Hope bought lots nos. 14 and 15 on the west side of Union St., likewise from Nicholas Kraemer (G2, p. 171.), but on which of the lots he actually resided is not here determined. LDC.

(f) Gideon Leeds, one of the original members of the Warren County Medical Society, a famous practitioner in that County, was born in Danbury, Conn., educated at Cheshire Episcopal Academy for the ministry, began study of medicine in Conn. and continued at Rutgers and at the New York Medical College, settled at Johnsonburg, Warren Co., N.J., in 1812 and succeeded Dr. Palmer at Hope in 1813, his practice requiring 16 and 20 mile rides on horseback. Among the people, he was considered the peer of his contemporaries. Shortly before his death, he removed to a farm near Marksboro, where he died 11 February 1837 aged 49-5-0, having married a daughter of General Hill of that village, but leaving no issue. (J.P. Snell, History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J., 1881, page 506.)

(6) By Deed of 13 March 1836, Gideon Leeds and wife Sarah, of Oxford Twp., Warren County, N.J. (g), conveyed to William B. Dey of Knowlton Twp., same county, for \$2300 a lot in the village of Hope, "now in the possession of the said Gideon Leeds", having 103 feet 2 inches frontage on Union Street and 135 feet 4 inches depth, bounded west by said street, north by a lot owned by James K. Swayze, south by Moravian Alley, and east by "Treect" (Trout) Alley, being part of the lots nos. 17 and 18 in the plan of said village. (Warren Co. Deed Book No. 14, page 505.)

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(7) By deed of 18 Aug. 1838, William B. Dey of Knowlton Twp., Warren Co., N.J., conveyed to Daniel Mixsell of Oxford Twp., same county, for \$1800 the same described property, reciting the deed above abstracted. (Warren Co. Deed Book no. 21, page. 526.)

(8) By deed of 18 May 1849, Daniel Mixsell and wife Elisabeth, of Hope Township (h), conveyed to Abraham Freese of same place, for \$2600 the same property described in item (6), "Being the same lot with the stone dwelling and all other improvements thereon", and reciting the deeds of 1836 and 1838 above abstracted. (Warren County Deed Book no. 31, page 295.) See first paragraph on page 1 hereof in regard to Abraham Freese converting the house into an hotel in "1844".

(9) By deed of 11 March 1854, Abraham Freese and wife conveyed to Gideon L. Howell the abovesaid house and lot.

(10) By deed of 21 March 1860, Gideon L. Leeds conveyed the house and the southern part of the lot to Mathew L. Ribble.

(11) By deed of 1st April 1863, Mathew L. Ribble and wife Sarah A., of Hope Twp., conveyed to John L. Hawk and Lorenzo M. Swayze, of same place, for \$4000 "The tavern house and lot situated in the village of Hope", reciting the two deeds last above listed and describing the lot as having a 103½ feet frontage on Union St. and a 135 feet 4 inches depth, bounded north by James K. Swayze, west by Union St. south by Moravian Alley, and east by Trout Alley, "Which said premises is designated in the town plot of the village of Hope as lots nos. 17 and 18", and "Are the same

(g) Note that Warren County was created from the southern part of Sussex County in 1824.

(h) Hope Township was created 1839 from adjacent parts of Oxford and Knowlton Townships.

which the said Mathew L. Ribble now occupies as a tavern stand, sheds, etc. From the lot described is excepted the part which G.L. Howell heretofore conveyed to John H. Angle "On which a saddlers shop * is now erected". (Warren Co. Deed Book no. 56, page 480.)

(I2) By deed of 1st April 1868, James K. Swayze, administrator of the estate of Lorenzo M. Swayze (1) late of Hope Twp., deceased, conveyed to Nicholas Martenis of same place, for \$2150 the undivided half interest in "The American Hotel House and Lot in the village of Hope", reciting that the land was the same purchased by Swayze and Hawk by deed of 1st Apr. 1863, and that said Martenis was highest bidder at the public sale ordered by the Orphans Court. (Warren Co. Deed Book no. 74, page 802.)

(I3) By deed of 18 February 1869, John L. Hawk and wife Julia Ann and Nicholas Martenis and wife Rebecca, all of Hope Twp., conveyed to Lewis F. Larue of same place, for \$3868 the same property (j) in the village of Hope, reciting its being same which Hawk and Swayze purchased from M.L. Ribble as in item (II). (Warren Co. Deed Book no. 76, page 326.)

(I4) By deed of 1st Aug., 1876, Aurelius J. Swayze, administrator of the estate of Lewis F. Larow late of Hope Twp., deceased, conveyed to Edgar C. Howell of same place, the "American Hotel" property in the village of Hope, reciting its being the same which Larow purchased of Hawk and Martenis by deed above abstracted, and that Howell is the highest bidder at \$4000 at a public sale of the property held by order of the Orphans Court. (Warren County Deed Book no. 99, page 418.)

(I5) By deed of 23 April 1877, Edgar C. Howell and wife Emma L., of Hope Twp., conveyed to Gideon L. Howell of same place, for \$4000 the said "American Hotel" property

* Evidently the frame building next north of this hotel. On the map of Hope village published in Beers Atlas of Warren Co., 1874, it is shown marked J.H. Angle Hat Store.

(1) Lorenzo Marshall Swayze, eldest son of State Senator James K. Swayze of Hope, died 1864, having purchased in 1856 the house (NJ-580) next south of this hotel.

(j) On the map of Hope village, published in Beers Atlas of Warren County, 1874, "American Hotel" is so marked, with "P.L. Struble", evidently as lessee.

(k) reciting the deed last above abstracted. (Warren County Deed Book no. IOI, page 522.)

(I6) By deed of 6 Oct. 1892, William H. Bowers, administrator c.t.a. of the estate of Gideon L. Howell, late of Hope Twp., deceased, conveyed to Thomas B. Flagler and Joseph Address, both of said place, the same property in the village of Hope, reciting the deeds of 1876 and 1877 last above abstracted, and that the grantees were the highest bidders at a public sale of the property held by order of the Orphans Court. (Warren County Deed Book no. I48, page I75.)

(I7) By deed of 7 May 1898, James Dunlap, executor of the will of Thomas B. Flagler decd., and Melissa his wife, and James Dunlap, all of Fairbault County, Minnesota, conveyed to James Address of Hope Twp., for \$585 the undivided half interest in the American Hotel, reciting the deeds of 1876, 1877, and 1892 above abstracted. (Warren County Deed Book no. I63, page I36.)

(I8) By deed of 22 Apr. 1925, Abbie Address, widow, and George L. Address and wife, the widow and sole heirs of Joseph Address late of Hope Twp. deceased, conveyed to Hiram Rush of Belvidere, Warren County, the lot and the building "Known as the American Hotel property in the village of Hope", reciting the title from Edgar C. Howell as outlined above. (Warren County Deed Book no. 247, p.334)

(I9) By deed of 1st Aug. 1929, Clara A. Rush, widow, of Hope Twp., conveyed to Catherine McManus of the borough of Montville, Morris County, N.J., "The American Hotel property in the village of Hope", reciting that Hiram Rush died in 1928 seized thereof and by his will devised the same to his wife the said Clara A. Rush, grantor herein. (Warren County Deed Book no. 256, page IOO.)

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(k) "The following comprises the present business interests of the village of Hope, together with the names of the parties engaged. Two hotels, the "Union" by H.W. Rundle, and the "American" by G.W. Howell; three general stores, kept by John Freese, Edwin Turner, and Alpheus Swayze; one drug-store by A.L. Gibbs; one hardware store by J.S. Christian; one merchant tailor and furnishing store by Benjamin Harrison; one harness-maker J.F. Galloway; foundry and machine shop by Aten and Woolverton; three blacksmith shops by James Cprson, F.H. Christian, and Cunningham Bros.; one wheelwright shop by John H. Black; one shoe-shop by R. Bartron; furniture and undertaking by Wm. A. Corsen; two markets by A. Gruver and Wm. Miller. (J.P. Snell, editor, History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J., 1881, page 382.)

(20) By deed of 13 Oct. 1931, Catherine McManus, above-named, conveyed the same property to the Sussex Florist and Nursery Supply Company, Inc. (Warren County Deed Book no. 265, page 127.)

(21) By deed of 11 May 1938, the abovenamed Supply Company, with Arthur D., Susie and John Hession, stockholders, conveyed to William D. Whitesell of Hackettstown Twp., Warren County, the "American Hotel property in the village of Hope", subject to a \$8000 mortgage given by Catherine McManus, and reciting her deed as above abstracted. (Warren County Deed Book no. 279, page 277.) Mr. Whitesell remains as owner and occupant of the hotel at the time of our survey of the house in 1942.

A postal card view published by Taylor and Davis, Haddonfield, N.J., shows the front of this hotel, labelled "American House off Route No. 6, Hope, N.J.", and on the reverse this note :- "Wm/ D. Whitesell, Prop. Historical Landmark built by the Moravians in 1780. Chicken and Steak Dinners. Bar." The survey party, including the undersigned historian, were guests at this venerable public house overnight while taking final measurements of NJ-706 on 10 and 11 February 1942.

References :

Search of title in the land and probate records of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J.

J.W.Barber and H. Howe, Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey, 1845, pp.491-93.

W.H.Shaw, in J.P.Snell's History of Sussex and Warren Counties, N.J., 1881, pp. 658-668.

H.Race, A Historical Sketch of the Settlement of Hope in Sussex County 1768-1808, publ. in Proceedings of the N.J.Historical Society¹⁹¹¹, 2nd series, vol. XI, pp. 197-205.

Rev. C.F.Kluge, Sketch of Hope, N.J., publ. in Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society, vol. I, pp. 51 et seq.

Lewis D. Cook
Supervising Historian
20 April 1942

Approved _____ T

Seymour Williams , District Officer.